

# **Then You Can't Change Your Mind**

*Times of Trouble - III*

**FrankieWritesStuff**

## Then You Can't Change Your Mind by FrankieWritesStuff

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**Summary:**

It's not that Richie enjoys being high, it's more that he despises being sober. Once he discovered what being high is like, it almost became an addiction, a craving he gets whenever he's stressed or anxious. The urge to smoke a joint or drop acid becomes an itch in his skin, and he fidgets so bad that he can't sit still. At this point, he'd do anything to escape reality, escape his reality. He figures it has to do with escaping the all-encompassing melancholic droll of everyday life, the repetition of daily events, the push and pull of the proverbial tide of his consciousness as he rides the current between night and day.

And besides, being high is fun.

# Then You Can't Change Your Mind

## Author's Note:

here's another addition.

they are 15 in this, Richie is a stoner, and his sister is a dick to him sometimes.

again, title comes from Times of Trouble by Temple of the Dog. If you haven't listened to it yet, please do, it's such a good song. (i was raised on chris cornell and temple and sound garden and audio slave, so im allowed to think that chris cornell was one of the greatest musicians that ever walked the planet, and if you disagree then you're homophobic, sorry i don't make the rules :/ )

Richie wakes up to a pounding headache. He slowly blinks his eyes open; his glasses are still on his face, skewed to the side from where he was laying on the floor. He's curled up on the bathroom floor, in front of the toilet. He sits up and his stomach protests, and he immediately lurches for the toilet.

"Fuck" he wipes his mouth with the sleeve of his hoodie.

It never gets easier, and he always ends up drinking too much. He hasn't drunk this much in a while, though. It's been at least a year since the last time he fell asleep with his head cradled above the toilet bowl.

He rises from the floor and stares at himself in the mirror. He tries to tame his hair, but ends up just tugging his hood up over his head. He brushes his teeth rigorously, and uses a generous amount of mouthwash. He doesn't want anyone to know he was drinking on a school night. He throws on a pair of jeans he finds in his hamper and keeps the hoodie on. He's still wearing his socks from the day before, so he doesn't bother to change them. He goes to his room to grab his backpack and shoves a few joints, from his stash, in the front pocket. He checks the alarm clock on his nightstand, he's already running late by a half hour. Sarah definitely left already, the bastard.

He heads downstairs to pour himself the biggest cup of coffee the world has ever seen, and attempts to eat half a banana before he has to stop. Apparently, his stomach isn't a fan of bananas this morning. He finishes his coffee with a grimace, the taste never gets better, coffee is definitely not an acquired taste. His shoes are by the door, next to his skateboard, and he slips them on, tucking the laces into the shoe before grabbing his board.

He opens the door and shouts a goodbye to his parents, who are probably still asleep.

He makes it to the last five minutes of first period. A class he shares with Ben and Eddie.

He cracks the door to the classroom open, already grimacing with embarrassment. As soon as he enters the teacher stops talking and glares at him.

"Mr. Tozier, you're late again." the teacher crosses his arms across his chest.

Richie's shoulders drop, and he ducks his head down, staring at his sneakers. "I know, my alarm didn't go off this morning, and my sister left without me." it's basically the truth anyway, his alarm didn't go off because he didn't set it because he was busy working through an entire bottle of vodka.

"Nice excuse, but you're still late. I'm going to have to write you up. See me after class."

Richie makes his way to his seat and buries his head in his arms. He knows he's going to have to sit detention today, which means he's going to be late to the clubhouse, which means Eddie's going to be an insufferable shit all day. Ben quietly asks him if he's okay, and he groans in response, not lifting his head. He's too hungover to talk to anyone.

After he gets the detention slip from the teacher, he goes to his next class, and the class after that, and doesn't pay attention to anything. After third period, he has lunch period with the rest of the losers. He decides he might as well smoke a joint in the bathroom before lunch.

Might as well make today an interesting one.

It's not that Richie enjoys being high, it's more that he despises being sober. Once he discovered what being high is like, it almost became an addiction, a craving he gets whenever he's stressed or anxious. The urge to smoke a joint or drop acid becomes an itch in his skin, and he fidgets so bad that he can't sit still. At this point, he'd do anything to escape reality, escape his reality. He figures it has to do with escaping the all-encompassing melancholic droll of everyday life, the repetition of daily events, the push and pull of the proverbial tide of his consciousness as he rides the current between night and day.

It's monotonous.

It's predictable.

And being idle brings unfathomable terrors to the forefront of his mind. The summer of his thirteenth year, a summer he feels like he's never going to forget. Even if the one thing he wants to do is forget everything and just float.

And besides, being high is fun.

He gets stoned out of his mind in the bathroom.

He shows up to lunch like that, and calls it a religious experience, but the rest of the losers just think he's insane for pulling a stunt like that. They're all sitting at a bench outside of the cafeteria, trying to keep Richie under the radar. He's sitting at the table, pillowing his head in his arms, shoulders shaking with the giggles coursing through his system.

"It-it wasn't th-th-that funny, Rich"

That just makes Richie giggle harder.

"All I said w-w-was th-tha-"

"Don't repeat it," Bev says, exasperated.

Eddie's scowling in his seat, resting his elbow on the table and

cradling his chin in his hand.

Richie peeks at Eddie over his arm, and then exaggeratedly flops his whole body to the side to lay his head in Eddie's lap.

"Why the long face, spaghetti? You're not a horse!"

Eddie huffs, but still holds Richie so that he doesn't fall over, bracing his waist and neck, practically cradling him.

"Jesus, you're such a stoner."

Richie just grins at him.

"My names' not Jesus"

"Oh my God!"

"Nope, getting colder now!"

"Shut up! Just shut the fuck up, Richie"

"There we go!"

Eddie's trying to stifle a grin though, so he can't be that mad.

Richie can't stop smiling, he probably looks like a lunatic. He can't help it though, that's just how his friends make him feel: happy.

But then Richie remembers that he has detention after school.

His smile drops off his face.

"Fuck, guys, I have detention after school."

Eddie's grip on him tightens slightly. "What the fuck? Richie! You know we're going to the club house after school today!"

Richie turns and presses his face into Eddie's sweater. His speech gets muffled a bit. "I know, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be late this morning."

"You were late again?" Stan looks unimpressed. "I thought Sarah

drives you to school.”

“She left without me,” Richie leaves off the fact that she definitely left him on purpose probably as a punishment for getting drunk without her.

Stan just ‘hmm’s’ in response. A few moments of silence pass, Eddie still miffed at Richie for getting detention.

Richie breaks the quiet with a question. “Do you guys ever just want to float?” Richie drags one of Eddie’s hands to his hair as a prompt to pet him. Eddie obliges.

Mike crosses his arms on the table and leans forward, “what do you mean, Rich?”

Richie makes a questioning noise, “I dunno, just, do you ever wish you could just forget everything and just, like, exist?”

“Jesus, you really are stoned aren’t you” Bev chuckles, and scoots backwards to stand up.

“I’m going to the bleachers to smoke before next period starts. Anyone wanna join?” she fidgets with her lighter.

Richie jumps up, smacking Eddie in the face in his haste. “I’ll come!”

“Jesus, Richie!” Eddie rubs at his cheek.

Richie smacks a wet kiss to his cheek, “apologies, spagheds, I did not mean to wound thee”

Eddie shoves at his stomach pushing him away, “get out of here, you asshole” but he’s smiling the whole time.

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He smokes a cigarette with Bev, and they also share a joint, and then it’s time for the rest of the day. The classes are monotonous, but he doodles and writes some poetry in his notebook, so it’s not that bad.

In detention, he takes a nap, his high wears off and it always makes

him tired and drained when it does. There are a few other kids in the room with him, none of them are the Losers, though, so he keeps his head down and keeps quiet. He's just lucky that Bowers isn't in today.

When detention is finally over, he rides his board to the clubhouse, and climbs down the ladder. The rest of the losers are lounging around in the clubhouse.

And they all started smoking without him, how typical. It doesn't really bother him though, because he did smoke another joint by himself right after detention.

As usual, Bill brought the weed and Bev brought the rolling papers.

One time she brought a grav bong she made out of an old water bottle. She was never allowed to bring it again. Richie secretly loved it though, that was the highest he ever got from weed.

When he makes his way into the clubhouse he sees that three finished joints are snubbed out in an ash tray on the little table in the middle of the room. Three joints shared among six people is nothing, Richie already smoked three joints today by himself. His friends are such light weights. But, he supposes, he has been smoking weed for two years, since he was thirteen, whereas they all started smoking this year. He shivers as a cold breeze sifts around the room, slipping his hood over his head again from where it had drooped off. Smoke is lingering around the room, light from the low winter sun filtering through the slats of the roof and dancing around in the haze like a fog.

"you guys started without me?" he jokes around, making his way over to the hammock where Eddie is stretched out.

"y-you're one-one to talk, Rich, y-y-you started wi-without us th-this morning" Bill is squished between Mike, Stan, and Ben on the sofa.

"ha, true". He climbs into the hammock, sprawling across Eddie and puts his head on his chest. Eddie automatically reaches to secure Richie with his arms, wrapped around Richie's back. Bev is watching Richie, from her perch on the recliner, with a sort of intensity that makes him uncomfortably seen, and he immediately ruffles Eddie's



hair.

“sup, numbnuts”

“gross, don’t call me that, asshole”

Richie nuzzles his face into Eddie’s sweater in response, averting his gaze from Bev. She can think whatever she wants, this thing with Eddie (whatever this ‘thing’ is) is purely platonic (for now), and if she gives a shit, well that’s her own fucking problem. Richie closes his eyes, he’s still very high, and decides to doze off for a bit. The room is cold, but Eddie is like a mini little space heater. He feels Eddie start to comb his fingers through his hair, and sighs lightly. It’s a thing he’d started doing when they’d get high and Richie loved it, and no one else ever commented on it, and it seemed to relax Eddie too, so Richie never complained.

A while passes before anyone says anything, too afraid of breaking the quiet of the room.

“I don’t think I’ve seen him sober in weeks,” Mike says softly. Eddie glances at Mike from across the room.

“who?” he readjusts slightly, and Richie’s hand grips to the sleeve of Eddie’s sweater.

“Richie, dude. He’s always high or drunk.” Mike waves a hand in their direction and flops it back on Ben’s chest, who lets out an oomph at the action.

“yeah, and this morning he showed up hungover to class, and then got blitzed in the bathroom before lunch” Ben adds.

“I’m not really too worried, I mean we’re all high right now, but you’re right, he has been smoking a lot more lately.” Bev chimes in from her seat, cigarette dangling from her lips. “and I’ve seen the tabs in the box too, underneath the rolling papers. He’s not fucking subtle.”

Eddie’s hand stalls and Richie whines in his sleep. He continues stroking, distracted.

“Tabs?”

“LSD, Eddie, your little friend has been dropping acid.” Bev flicks ash into the tray on the small table.

Eddie flounders a bit, and it looks like he’s having an existential crisis.

“Richie’s doing acid? He does acid? Since when?” he sounds hysterical.

Richie chooses that moment to reach a hand up and pat Eddie’s cheek. “Since summer, babes”

Eddie smacks his hand. “don’t call me that, and what the fuck dude? How often?” his voice rises with his panic.

“Shhhh, keep it down Eds, you’re getting shrill.”

Eddie tugs on a tuft of hair and Richie hisses.

“How often,” he mutters through gritted teeth.

“I don’t know dude, like twice a week?”

“WHAT THE FUCK RICHIE?”

“Rich what the fuck?”

The other losers exclaim their surprise at him. Eddie seems to be the only one who’s furious. Richie doesn’t really understand why they’re all making a big deal about it, it’s not like he’s addicted. He can stop whenever he wants. Richie calms Eddie down and explains that he’s pretty safe when he’s using. He doesn’t leave his house, and he doesn’t take a lot to begin with.

“just enough to get a nice buzz”

“a nice buzz...”

“yeah like, the walls melting when you turn your head, seeing sounds, hearing colors, that kinda thing”

“seeing sounds...”

“you make me sound crazy Eds,”

“you ARE crazy! You're melting your brain because what, you're disillusioned with reality? Scared of being sober?!”

“wow that hit the nail right on the head, babe”

“don't call me that”

He doesn't tell Eddie that it's impossible to take a small amount of acid because it comes on a little tab that melts on your tongue. He can't control the size of the tab. He feels like shit for lying to Eddie, but he's been lying to him for years, so it's not like it's a new occurrence. He does it for Eddie's own good, anyway. He's still stoned, and he feels too much right now, so he just shoves his face back into Eddie's sweater, and the topic is dropped for now, much to Richie's relief.

Mike's initial comment sticks with him though, he doesn't remember the last time he was completely sober, it had been a few weeks. He's high most days at school, and drunk most weekends. But the past few weeks had been particularly bad. He'd been high or at least coming off a high for the whole week, and he'd been tripping the entirety of last weekend. Bev had to duct tape his window shut because he kept trying to jump out of it while she was trip-sitting. there wasn't even a reason for his lack of sobriety all week, he just hates being sober. And besides, if he hugs Eddie for too long, stares at Eddie too much, notices the way Eddie blushes when he calls him “Eds”, “Babe”, “spagheds” or whatever nicknames, he can just blame it on being high, that he's not being himself. And who can get mad at that.

He's not creepy or perverted if he's just extremely under the influence.